

Research Committee Meeting
Maryland Lynching Truth & Reconciliation Commission

Date: Friday, January 17th, 2020

Time: 11:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Location: **Lillie Carroll Jackson Civil Rights Museum**
1320 Eutaw Place
Baltimore, MD 21217

Minutes

Attendance:

Elgin Klugh (Coppin State University)
Iris Barnes (Lillie Carroll Jackson Civil Rights Museum)
Shana Rochester (Lillie Carroll Jackson Civil Rights Museum)
Tim Baker (Maryland State Archives)
David Armenti (Maryland Historical Society)
Steve McKenna (Independent Scholar)
Corey Henderson (Independent Scholar)
Marshall Stevenson (University of Maryland, Eastern Shore)
Charles Chavis (George Mason University) – by phone
Simone Barrett (Morgan State University) – by phone
Linda Duyer (Independent Scholar) – by phone

1. Klugh opened the meeting with a special thank you to the Lillie Carroll Jackson Civil Rights Museum for allowing meeting space.

2. Discussion of operational definition of lynching for the purposes of the committee's work (to propose to the commission). After some discussion, generally agreed upon that the definition should stay close to the language in HB 307, and be guided by EJI language.

- Proposed definition:

“Murder resulting from unlawful mob violence with the apparent complicity of local and state officials, intended to inspire terror and subservience to white supremacy.”

- Consensus that the committee will utilize the definition that we come up with, and the initial list of victims, as the central mission, but be open to receiving additional information about other acts of violence (including near lynching, rumors of lynching, and other incidents that may not fit neatly within the defined parameters of the commission's operational definition of lynching).

- McKenna suggested posting the definition in the google drive for committee members to review, prior to bringing it forth to the full commission for a decision

- Consensus regarding baseline data to collect for each incident:

- Timeline and details of event
- Rationale for the lynching
- Key Individuals involved
- Political implications (within local and state politics)
- Public reaction (black and white communities)
- Newspaper accounts
- Government / Court documents
- Death Certificate
- Coroner's report
- Photographs and any other ephemera
- Bibliography of writing on the lynching
 - Descendants (of victims, perpetrators, witnesses) – any info that they can provide
- Local Historical Societies
- Local Coalitions

* Decisions:

a) Proposed Definition to be drafted and put in the google drive for research committee members to review. Then, proposed to the full commission at the next meeting.

B) Proposed Baseline data to collect for each event will be brought forth to the full commission

3. Workflow for gathering and processing research materials

- Baker proposed some general guidelines concerning workflow for gathering and processing research materials

- Suggested that information first be put in the google drive, then once vetted, uploaded to the commission website hosted by the state archives. Examples of documents that would not be uploaded to the website are various kinds of private documents that families may be willing to share with the commission, but not with the general public due to privacy concerns. Also, perhaps copyrighted documents.

- Barnes offered example of the Holocaust Museum and how they need to keep the location of their archives confidential due to threats from those opposed to preserving the history, including even holocaust deniers.

- Chavis suggested that what we are doing may be seen more as an investigation wherein documents are not revealed until the investigation is over.
- Baker – stated that for openness and transparency, the committee should be able to provide read-only access to google drive as we do not want to be perceived as hoarding information – particularly in the case of any information requests.
- Henderson suggested using Google forms, offered assistance in setting it up
- Point made that it will be important to have information stored in more than one place to reduce vulnerability to loss
- Barret suggested the possibility of a neutral repository. Asked if individuals would be trusting of a state to protect their records when the state proved untrustworthy in protecting lives and delivering justice in the past.
- Baker – suggested workflow/ SOP:

Workflow:

Materials arrive by-

Delivery of paper files by hand to MSA staff

Delivery of paper or electronic files to Commissioners

Via MDLTRC email

Via MDLTRC website form

Regular Mail (to the MSA?)

Materials accessioned

Each item is given an exhibit number

If the material is coming from the public and the intention is to return the material once it is scanned it should be receipted - (are they gifts or deposits for scanning and return only)

Materials given a collections or series unit number

Materials described

Foldered (electronically or in hard copy)

Hard copy materials are digitized; objects are photographed

Materials collected will be associated with the individual biography or biographies and will be organized into the framework developed by the Maryland State Archives under MSA biographical series collection numbers with pins.

Metadata Sample intake form

<https://digital.kenyon.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=librarydocs>

Deposit Form for scanning (Special Collections, MSA)

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1QpDWPh1D_VC02_6mQtzkQT8jotMWFD5M

* Decisions:

- a) Utilize the google drive as an initial repository – vetted documents will go to the State Archives MDLTRC website
- b) Archives staff should have access to the google drive

c) The State Archives MDLTRC website will be the central repository for all public-facing documents

4. Communications to Historical Societies / Work with Coalitions and historical societies

- letters need to go out as soon as possible
- Will there be commission letterhead?
- McKenna discussed the fact that many historical society workers are volunteers and will need time and perhaps assistance to go through documents
- Barnes asked if we need to provide money to historical societies
- Armenti suggested that we frame the request for information as a volunteer opportunity, societies not obligated – also, some historical societies may provide an ideal public hearing location
- Klugh raised concern about money for travel to historical societies, and any costs associated with duplication
- Baker – lists of historical societies and coalitions should be on the website under additional resources
- Baker – State archives could pay for some basic postage and can provide free scanning
- Note to give Baker google drive access
- Chavis – draft letter
- Armenti – we will want to make language in the letter reflect more of a volunteer and partnership opportunity than an obligation
- McKenna suggested that part of our role should be to help coalitions to identify appropriate people to invite to the hearing (descendants of various individuals who were involved in, or would have knowledge of, the lynching). In a Howard county case, he has identified almost 80 involved individuals with potential descendants.
- Chavis – has worked with a genealogist in Wicomico County, MD; reported that his university (GMU) has provided 2 research assistants that can assist us with genealogy

* Decisions

- a) We will need to draft a letter to send to historical societies alerting them to our efforts, information that we are looking for, and offering an opportunity to partner with them in identifying and providing information.
- b) A Draft letter will be posted in the google drive for review and comment prior to presentation at the next full commission meeting.
- c) In communications with historical societies and coalitions, state that we are also interested in information regarding additional incidents of lynching or related racial violence
- d) State Archives may be able to pay initial basic postage

5. Budget request

- Klugh: Copy/reproduction costs; travel; postage; genealogist; Oral Historian

- Budget may be very limited – need to think about what would be ideal, and ways that goals can be achieved with limited budgetary resources.

6. Voted to adjourn, 2:00pm. Suggested that we meet at the Lillie Carrol Jackson Civil Rights museum again

- Note – the phone connection was problematic and dropped the callers on more than one occasion. This limited the participation of those attending by phone